Arkansas Department of Education

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Organizational Challenges

- *Modernize their technology*
- *Automate manual functions*
- *Simplify processes*
- *No development team*

Impact

- *Reduction in manual intervention and processes*
- *Automatic letters and notifications*
- *Direct tie to payment system and history*
- *Self-help capabilities*

Mainstream Technologies has been supporting the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Research and Technology Division on various projects since 2010. The ADE R&T Division's unofficial mission is to find ways to leverage technology in a manner that provides a flashlight to pertinent issues, rather than using it as a hammer for punitive corrective measures.

Over time, Mainstream Technologies has become subject matter experts for the department, becoming intimately familiar with their data sources and how to efficiently tap them to produce the information their users need. Various ADE departments and school district personnel across the state use the tools co-developed with Mainstream Technologies.

ARKANSAS EDUCATOR LICENSURE SYSTEM

The Arkansas Professional Licensure System (APLS) was the teacher professional licensure system designed to track certifications and progress in gaining teaching credentials but it didn't maintain a history. It contained several data elements such as educational experience, background checks and work experience but many of the required business rule checks and processes were handled manually by the Licensure team.

The project was intended to enhance APLS functionality and eventually replace it with the new Arkansas Educator Licensure System (AELS). AELS is a web-based architecture (using .NET, SQL Server) with built-in self-assist features designed to improve efficiencies and to stimulate usage among the members. It also provides a history of all elements and licenses held by an educator. Individual accomplishments of this project were automating manual processes, capturing institutional knowledge and incorporating established business rules found within the legacy system.

Mainstream worked extensively with the Licensure staff to add additional functionality not originally considered. The staff attempted to define as many user scenarios as possible and therefore subtle features were added based on real world licensing activities.
As a result, individual applicants and districts now have the ability to check their progress online thus eliminating manual oversight.
The improvements with AELS have resulted in accelerated tracking and reporting along with empowering educators to view and update their personal profiles online.

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